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REVIEW OF BOOKS.

Fulvius Valens, or the Martyr of Cæsarea, a Tragedy.
Adrastus, a Tragedy. By R. C. Dallas.

AN able writer in the *London Magazine* has penetrated, with considerable spirit, into the causes of the general failure in modern attempts at tragedy. His theory is simple, and he illustrates it with ability. The essence of tragedy, he maintains, is *action*, and that no merit of any other kind can atone for either its languor or its absence. We entirely agree with him, and attribute the modern predilection for the melodrama entirely to this cause. The play-going public do not attend to hear poetry recited, but to witness something done; and are more gratified even with extravaganza and dumb show, ungraced with lofty and poetical expression, than with a languid succession of pictorial and descriptive dialogue, which appeals to the fancy or the understanding, but never to the senses or to the heart. We even go farther than the writer to whom we have alluded; for we not only deem *action* the great requisite, but that it must be action essentially and specially active,—a remark that brings us at once to the first of the dramas, the title of which heads this article. A short descent upon the *Dramatis Personæ* and plot will fully illustrate our meaning.

Fulvius Valens, a noble Roman, and an aged and devoted Christian proselyte of Cæsarea, under the government of *Claudius Herminianus*, has a son and a daughter, who are attached and partly betrothed to the nephew and the niece (also a brother and a sister) of the Governor. At the time the drama opens, Herminianus has received orders from Rome to suppress the Christian faith, and in consequence will not listen to the pleadings of his nephew and niece, but resolves to force the latter to marry a *Cornelius Afer*, who is struck to the earth by *Marcus*, the disappointed bridegroom. The distress and interest of the piece is created by the Christian resolution of *Fulvius* and his family, who withstand pardon and every sort of temptation rather than give up Christianity.

Now, it is easy to see that much pathetic incident, and lofty and heroic bearing, may be mixed up with a story of religious self-devotion; but yet do we maintain, that no such story on a Christian basis can be rendered dramatically interesting. The men and women of the drama are to be the victims of the passions, not their masters; and

from the moment we discover that they are so, dramatic interest is at an end. In a word, we *feel* the natural, but only *admire* the superinduced; a fact, which leads to another discovery,—that all conventional feelings are very secondarily dramatic, meaning those which are national, sectarian, or the joint and equal property of multitudes. All these notions clog individualization, and it was by rendering them so subservient, when he made use of them, that Shakespeare distinguishes himself from all other dramatists. By attending to the Romans of Coriolanus and Julius Cæsar, as compared with those of the Catiline and Sejanus of Ben Jonson, the nature of the distinction will be obvious. The first are men as well as Romans, the others Romans alone. There is a dramatic defect, therefore, in the plot of Fulvius Valens, which is not to be got over; he is a beau-ideal Christian, but scarcely a man; and the very principle of his heroism is to endure, not to act. With the single exception of the assassination,—a momentary incident,—the play is a mere tissue of suffering and resignation from beginning to end, described in terse and elegant blank verse indeed, but no otherwise a play than the thousand-and-one of the gentlemanly, scholastic, and sometimes very poetical productions, which, under the name of Tragedies, have preceded it.

We have been led to notice this tragic attempt the more particularly, in consequence of an address by the author, in which we are informed that it was rejected at one of the Winter Theatres, notwithstanding the expressed approbation of Mr. Kean. We cannot enter on the grounds of the opinion formed by the latter, as it is not given; but, with a sincere respect for the evident talent of the author, we are entirely with the Management in their decision against it as an acting play.

The Adrastus of Mr. Dallas is borrowed from the Adventures of the young Phrygian Prince of that name, at the Court of Crœsus, King of Lydia, as related in the first book of Herodotus. Adrastus, after unwarily slaying his own brother, is forced by the destiny of the ancients to fulfil an ominous dream of the hitherto prosperous King of Lydia, by accidentally spearing his son Atys in the chase. We are not quite sure that the shadowy traditions of a very remote antiquity form the best sort of materials for the excitement of modern sympathy; but we are certain that if the main incidents are produced in the fulfilment of dreams, that such is not the case. In point of fact, there is no dramatic interest in this piece from beginning to end, although pleasingly written. The hero, having unwittingly killed a brother, is in a state of decent sorrow during the whole play, and after putting an end to another young prince by accident, he kills himself at last, as in duty bound. There is an addition of perplexity to be sure, because the wife of his friend, the latter prince, is in love with him; and failing to inspire him with a mutual passion, she adopts the novel expedient of accusing him of a similar attempt upon herself: but all this ends in nothing, and neither advances nor retards the catastrophe. As usual, the versification is fair, and the diction occasionally eloquent and poetical: but of distinctive character, or soul-exciting incident, there is none; although written, as Mr. Dallas informs us, in consequence of the general complaint of the dearth of modern Tragedy, and apparently with some latent expectation of supplying the deficiency. The author

gives the following sketch of the *Dramatis Personæ* in an introduction :—

CRÆSUS: amiable, hospitable, virtuous, and brave : but vain of his wealth, elate with his prosperity, and self-glorious.

ATYS: frank, candid, highly susceptible of friendship and amiable feelings; not subject to painful passions.

ADRASTUS: mild and susceptible, deeply suffering grief, virtuous, and noble-minded.

ADA: of violent passions, but not abandoned.

What ingredients for a tragedy ! and yet there is talent and poetry here too. It is very extraordinary.

MR. IRVING, AND " THE CALEDONIAN."

IT is possible to have too much even of a good thing ; but as we do not think this proposition has yet been proved in respect to the criticisms which have been hitherto called forth by Mr. Irving's preaching, we too shall contribute our mite towards the mountain which this gentleman has to bear as a check-weight to his unrivalled popularity : And if our readers do not complain of the addition, we are pretty sure that *he* will not—for he evidently thinks his shoulders even broader and more atlantean than they are, and courts the whole world of criticism to leap upon them as if they were made for the load.

The remarks that we now propose to offer, on the person whose name is placed at the head of this paper, are intended to be purely critical and descriptive. With creeds and opinions we profess not to meddle, as it regards others. And indeed, in the present instance, this would be quite uncalled-for ; as the remarkable person who is the subject of this notice seldom thinks it necessary to do so himself, in a way that can call forth the especial animadversion of any particular class or sect of Christians. He preaches the Christian Religion in a Christian land ; and it is with his *mode* of doing this, and the powers—natural, accidental, and acquired—which he brings to his task, that we shall alone concern ourselves.

Before proceeding to do this, however, it may not be uninteresting to many of our readers if we describe the scene in which takes place what we are afterwards to speak of more especially ; for London has witnessed nothing like it, of a similar kind, for many years.

If the reader " knows the town," and is disposed to betake himself leisurely, about the hour of half-past ten o'clock on a Sunday morning, towards a little obscure street in Hatton-garden, named Cross-street, he may chance to see, on his way thither, the most splendid equipages of the day rolling past him, filled with the flower of the land's nobility, the *élite* of her statesmen and governors, the wisest of her law-givers and her law expounders, the most successful and wealthiest of her merchants and speculators ; and, if it were the custom for *them* to ride in carriages, he might also recognise the most accomplished of her poets and scholars, the sagest of her men of science, the most fastidious of her critics, the acutest of her reasoners, the deepest and subtlest of her thinkers, and—(not included in any of the above classes) the most contented and loyal, as well as the most discontented and reforming of her politicians.—Thinking, as he sees all these pass by him, on where *he* is going, and the object of his errand—to hear what is called a " Popu-

lar Preacher"—and knowing, perhaps, the usual constitution of the assemblies which are accustomed to attend exhibitions of this kind—he may reasonably enough wonder within himself, what sort of a "Popular Preacher" that must be, who could contrive to attract an assembly formed in a great measure of the above-named classes of persons; and he may probably chuse to contrast such an assembly with the one he is about to form a part of—consisting, as he expects, of a score or two of ignorant fanatics, who take the preacher for a saint because he is candid enough to proclaim himself a sinner—as many youthful enthusiasts, in whom enthusiasm in others, or even the appearance of it, is capable of engendering its like—a few reasonable and sincere Christians, who go to Church on the Sabbath-day to worship their Maker, almost regardless of what they may *hear* there, secure of feeling the voice of piety and truth stirring within their own breasts; and, to make up the rest of the audience, a motley mixture of idlers of all kinds, led thither by anything rather than a sense of duty, or a desire to learn. But, as he arrives in the immediate neighbourhood of the place he is seeking, how will he be surprised to find that to the same spot are tending, or have arrived, all the distinguished persons, the sight of whom had led him into the above reflection; and he will then see that one *has* arisen among us, capable of attracting and fixing such an audience as he had barely supposed the possibility of. In fact, mind, under whatever form, or to whatever end it may develope itself—*will* attract mind; and the force of this attraction will generally be found to depend, as in physics, on the quantity of the attracting object; not on the medium through which it acts, not on the motive which causes its action, not on the subject about which it is employed, not even on the relative importance of that subject to the other minds so attracted; but solely to the quantity of kindred mind which is put forth. If a man of intellect and genius chuses to expatiate on a straw or a feather, men of intellect and genius will flock to hear him; if a fool holds forth on the salvation of the human soul, and the means of attaining for it eternal life—none but fools will listen.

On arriving at the doors of the Caledonian Chapel, our supposed reader will find that he has something more to do than pass quietly in, take his seat, and listen. If he has not provided himself with a ticket, he will have to wait till eleven o'clock, when the doors are opened to the public; he will have to take his chance in a crowd little less numerous and not a whit less boisterous than that which he may have formed a part of on the first night of one of Kean's performances; he will have to bear, if he can, the most excessive heat and the most intolerable pressure; and (worst of all, if he happens to be encumbered with any rather severe notions of the decencies and decorums which should prevail in a place of worship on a sabbath-day) he will have to witness a scene of noise, confusion, quarrelling, screaming, fainting, together with laughing, joking, and gossiping—aided by here and there one who is audibly deprecating all these—that he is not likely to have met with before, anywhere—and the like of which, in a Christian Church, he could not have anticipated, and will not believe till he sees. We will suppose him, however, to have attained a situation where he can see and hear the Preacher; who will now, at a few minutes after the doors are opened to the public, rise up before him. And now,

adieu to the scene of riot which he has hitherto been regarding with mingled feelings of surprise and indignation. *That*, and everything else that may have been occupying his thoughts till now, will vanish from them and be forgotten in a moment, and they will be seized, fixed, and rivetted by the extraordinary person who stands before him. In fact, we will at once unequivocally state our opinion, that it is to his personal appearance and manner Mr. Irving owes at least half his popularity. He is, without exception, the most striking looking person we have ever seen. With a figure grand, commanding, and perfectly well formed—a carriage filled to overflowing with the nobility of our nature, and evincing, to a degree not at all short of coxcombry, an intense consciousness of comparative superiority—features correspondent in a remarkable degree with each other and with the form which they crown, and instinct with intellectual life in every portion and in every movement of them—a complexion dark, clear, and uniformly pale all over, yet without the least appearance of care or ill-health—a head of hair coal-black, curling, clustering, and parted in the middle of the forehead so as to admit of its being flung back on either side—action, though evidently studied, yet in the highest degree animated, appropriate, and expressive—a voice deep, sonorous, and solemn, yet capable of enforcing the most opposite feelings and sentiments, from the most humble love and confiding hope, to the most cutting reproof or the bitterest sarcasm—and, finally, an enunciation singularly clear, distinct, and impressive;—these are the external and adventitious advantages which Mr. Irving possesses, as we conceive, over all his contemporaries, without exception or comparison; and it would have been singular if, with these alone, he had not made some sensation on his arrival and establishment among us. But these are not sufficient, of themselves, to attract and satisfy the persons whom he is in the habit of collecting together. And, in fact, putting all these out of the question, he is not a common person. We shall speak freely of him, as he does every day of others. The mere external advantages which he possesses never yet did belong to a common-place person; but, on the other hand, they never yet did belong to a man of genius—to a person of very high intellectual gifts, or even to one of very extensive intellectual attainments, and accordingly we hold Mr. Irving to be about at an equal distance from each of these. Those who would depreciate him without knowing how, say that he is nothing; and those who would exalt him without knowing why, say that he is everything. But the truth is, that he is about as far from the one as from the other. He is a man of vigorous and fearless intellect; with a quick penetration; an acute judgment; a lively imagination; considerable knowledge of human nature, and a perfect willingness to adapt himself to the dictates of that knowledge; an entire self-possession and self-control; a perfect acquaintance with the weapons he employs, and an entire mastery over them, and a total absence of all scruples about turning those of his adversary to his own advantage; great skill in pressing a point where it will bear to be pressed, and great tact in seeing where it must be left to itself, slurred over, or blinked altogether; and, withal, an insurmountable self-complacency—not to call it an intense personal vanity—which, by strengthening his nerves and arming his intellectual courage, prompts him to think and feel, and enables

him to say and do things that other men, not so gifted, would either shrink from altogether, or spoil in the attempting.

The only points that we have observed in Mr. Irving, to set off against these advantages, are, a somewhat narrow fund of scholastic knowledge; a very limited share of taste; a mingled poverty and affectation of style, arising from a confined phraseology; an indifferent ear; and—a Scotch accent.

But there is nothing in all the above (the reader remarks) to account for the extraordinary effect which Mr. Irving produces. Others have possessed, upon the whole, at least equal claims to attention with him, who have preached their way quietly to their graves, unknown, and unsought-for out of the pale of their own flock. It is true: and this brings us to the other half of the secret of Mr. Irving's popularity. We have ventured to attribute a great portion of it to his personal appearance and manner. We will confidently refer the rest to the *mode* in which he applies the intellectual advantages he possesses. In the first place, he is a very clear, shrewd, and accomplished disputant; as far as it is his cue to reason, a most close and clever reasoner; and to reason and be reasoned with is the forte—or the foible (whichever you please) of Englishmen of a certain class of mind. The proverb which says that “Seeing is believing, and feeling is the naked truth,” is not always true with respect to them. They will not always be convinced by the evidence of their senses, still less by that of their imagination, under the name of faith; but you may reason them into anything. Cobbett is the most popular writer of the day because he is the clearest, shrewdest, strongest, and boldest reasoner; and he can, by means of this faculty, at any time convince half his readers that black is white one week, and that white is black the next. Mr. Irving is the most popular preacher of the day, in a great measure from the same cause. The rock on which his predecessors and his rivals have split is, the appealing, in too great a degree, to the *faith* of their hearers. Faith may safely enough be trusted to as a strong-hold in the minds of women and of enthusiasts; but it is but a sandy and uncertain foundation on which to build a lofty and ponderous superstructure in minds which have been accustomed to exercise and depend on their reason. Now Mr. Irving has seen this; and, with an intellectual courage worthy of the cause which he is pleading, he steps boldly into the field, and professes to establish the Christian Religion on a footing of pure reason. We speak now, in particular, of the line which he has adopted in the course of his last few Sundays, during which time his popularity has increased to a pitch that it had never reached during any former period of his ministry here. He has the skill, too, to make use of his reasoning faculty, and that of his hearers, as an offensive as well as a defensive weapon. With the battering-ram of his arguments he first beats down all systems of Religion that are founded on natural evidences, and all systems of morals that would attempt to do without a religion; he then, magnanimously enough, flings himself for the moment out of the strong-hold of a future state of rewards and punishments, and professes to shew that, without the Christian Religion, as revealed from on high, we are, even here in our present finite state, not a whit better than the beasts that perish. It is true, this is no *proof* that the Christian Religion *has been revealed* from on high. But that is no business

of his. He, of course, *assumes that*, all along; because he professes to preach, and does preach, the religion of the Bible. Again: He bids us look at what the Greeks and Romans were, without a revealed Religion. But if you were to ask him whether we, who *have* a revealed Religion, are better citizens, better subjects, better fathers, better sons, better husbands, better wives—whether we are upon the whole wiser and happier than they, who had it not?—he would probably reply—*We, who have it, are*;—if you are not so, *you have it not*—whatever you may profess; for to make people so, is its natural and necessary consequence.

But we are travelling somewhat beyond the limits of our proposed course. We merely mention this, as one of the weak points necessarily involved in the line of teaching which Mr. Irving has thought proper to adopt, since our attention has been attracted towards him. If he makes the Christian Religion an *object* of reason, he at the same time lays it open to be made the *subject* of reason; which it is evidently above, as well as beyond. And to part with Faith from a religion of whatever denomination, is to part with its soul. Or rather, a Religion without faith is a contradiction in terms; for Religion is faith. To attempt to establish, in the minds and hearts of his audience, Religion without the aid of Faith, may gain him *hearers*, but it will never gain him *converts*. And, moreover, it is exactly equivalent to doing that which he himself so delights to ridicule and vituperate; namely, to attempt to establish a morality without a Religion.

Mr. Irving's chusing to employ reason, then, as his chief weapon in favor of Christianity, as well as against infidelity, is one cause of his popularity. We conceive another to be his perpetual employment of a sarcastic and satirical vein, in reference to persons, subjects, and things which are at the present moment universally known and universally interesting. He flies at everything, and at every body—Art, Science, Literature, Politics, Government, Fashion—all these as they exist in all parts of civilized Europe, and all the persons and things that are publicly connected with them.

“Nought is for him too high, or aught too low.” And he treats of them all in the manner of a man sure of his mark, superior to all consequences, and out of the reach of all reply. He may find himself mistaken in this. But, in the meantime, his end is atchieved. People like to hear their betters abused; and do not much object to fancying themselves included, provided it be done with a high hand, and not in too personal a manner. The first statesmen in the land go to hear Mr. Irving's philippics against statesmen who profess to govern a nation without the aid of Religion; because it is impossible he should mean *them*—though he fixes his eye upon them as he speaks, and causes half his audience to do the same!—The poets and critics go to hear him insist that, though poetry and criticism are good things, all poets and critics are paltry fellows! And if he were to preach on any other day than Sunday, the ministers of the Gospel would flock to hear him declare that the stage is better served than the pulpit, and disprove his own assertion in his own person! In short, there is nothing in the world so attractive as personality; and there is no preacher a tenth part so personal as Mr. Irving.

The third and last cause which we shall mention, as contributing to

Mr. Irving's extraordinary popularity, is the perfectly original manner in which he puts forth the matter that he has to offer to the attention of his hearers; and we conceive the crying *fault* of this manner to be the chief reason of its attractiveness. Being fully aware that Sincerity itself in a public teacher is not enough, but that the evident *appearance* of it must be superadded, his determination to be earnest and fervent frequently betrays him into a semblance of malice and vindictiveness. His abhorrence of *sin* is so great, that at times it appears to escape him under the form of hatred and contempt for *sinners*. In short, he sometimes preaches "the Gospel of peace"—that which "bringeth glad tidings of great joy"—not as if it were a message of mercy and pardon to those who will receive it, but merely an anathema of destruction against those who will not. We do not, of course, complain of his having the spirit and good sense to abandon that cant of meekness, humility, and brotherly love, which is the besetting vice of his cloth, and which is very apt to beget the contempt and indifference it is intended to hide; but, on the other hand, an impudent assumption of superiority was never yet an evidence of its actual existence, except in the minds of the vulgar and the weak of all classes. But that assumption is attractive nevertheless; and perhaps Mr. Irving thinks himself justified in putting it on, in order to gain the ear and heart of those who might be lost without his aid!

Having thus gone through, at greater length than we at first intended, what seem to be the principal causes of this preacher's unprecedented popularity, it only remains to add in what other particulars he differs from his cotemporaries and fellow-labourers in the same work. Of his doctrines (which, however, he seldom puts forth in any very pointed manner) it is unnecessary to speak in detail, since they are those which are well known under the denomination of the High Scotch Kirk. With respect to his manner of arranging his discourse, we conceive it to be most artfully inartificial. There is no formal opening—no what may be called *mechanical* division—no peroration. And yet there is no abruptness—no irrelevancy—and no confusion. He generally begins with a slight reference to some of his previous discourses, and a simple announcement of the line of argument he means to adopt in the present; and then goes on naturally enough, as the points in question seem to suggest and call forth each other. This line is frequently lengthened out (not broken) by what cannot properly be called *bursts*, but structures of metaphorical eloquence, very skillfully and imaginatively piled up, and occasionally made to bear very pointedly and powerfully upon the question in hand. The foundation stone or nucleus of these is generally drawn from some highly popular and well known source—Shakespear, and the Scotch novels not excluded.

With respect to Mr. Irving's general style, I have said above that it is somewhat meagre, and, at the same time, affected; but it is, in fact, without any peculiar character of its own, and its parts are far from being consistent with each other. It is now plain to a degree of baldness—now ornamented to a pitch of garishness; now sober even to severity—now inflated even to bombast; now modern even to an implicit observance of Lindley Murray—now antique even to a servile imitation of Jeremy Taylor; and we have not observed that these changes are very carefully adapted to the thoughts and sentiments

which they clothe. Above all, his style is at times unpolished, and even ungrammatical to a degree that can scarcely be attributed to haste, since he reads every word of his discourses.

Finally, there is in Mr. Irving's action and demeanour, occasionally, a something that is quite peculiar to himself, and that is likely to remain so; at least, in the pulpit. It is chiefly used when he would express a particular degree of disapprobation; and consists of a blurt-ing motion of the lips, a fearful contracting of the brows, and a swaying backwards and forwards of the head over the left shoulder, which we know not how to distinguish by any specific title that would sound decorous on the occasion. If the manner we speak of were exhibited elsewhere than in the pulpit, it might be called swaggering.

It is remarkable that every body discovers a general likeness between Mr. Irving and Mr. Kean, though there is not the slightest similarity in any particular features, or in any part of the form. The truth is, Mr. Irving is to the pulpit, in some degree, what Mr. Kean is to the stage; and we are half disposed to believe that, but for the previous success of the one, that of the other would never have been heard of. There is, however, this especial difference between them—that the preacher is a man of talent only, while the actor is a man of high genius.

FEMALE INFANTICIDE.

WE are informed by the Newspapers, that the new piece coming out at Drury-lane Theatre, called the Cataract of the Ganges, is founded upon incidents supposed to arise out of one or other of the horrid infanticide practices in India. It may happen that the simple exposure on the banks of the Ganges forms the ground-work of the story, but it also may be borrowed from the much more extraordinary organized and systematic murder of female infants by their parents in Guzarat, which, within these twenty years, has been so happily put an end to by a humane and disinterested exertion of the British influence in India. The full evidence of the existence of the custom alluded to was first obtained by Mr. Duncan, a civil servant of the East India Company, when at Surat and Bombay, in the year 1800; and it is lamentable to add, that they were subsequently established beyond controversy. The Jarejahs, a leading tribe in Guzarat, supplied, possibly, the only instance of a people upon earth, who, without any absolutely explainable motive, imposed upon themselves the duty of systematically destroying the whole of their female offspring. Colonel Walker, the British military resident in Guzarat, who was directed by the Company to enquire into the facts, thinks it probable, from an account which he received at Barroda, that the custom arose from a reluctance on the part of the Jarejahs to give their daughters in marriage to the invading Mahometans. When the above gentleman, in the spirit of his instructions, interceded for the abrogation of a custom so revolting and detestable, he found it extremely difficult to induce the Jarejahs to listen to him. The excuses made were the trouble and expence of providing them with husbands of suitable rank. The Jarejahs themselves procured wives from another tribe called Sada; and such was the barbarous inveteracy of these women, that even when married to

Mahometans, they continued the same practice, against the inclination and religion of their husbands, destroying their own progeny without remorse, with a view to benefit the tribe from which they were descended. The Jarejahs spoke freely of the custom of putting their daughters to death, but were more reserved on the mode of their execution. They appeared at first unwilling to be questioned on the subject, and usually replied that it was an office of the women,—it belonged to the nursery, and made no part of the business of men. “What trouble in blasting a flower!” said one of them significantly. It appeared, however, that the most frequent methods were to drown them in milk or to put opium into their mouths; but no particular manner was laid down, except that they were to be dispatched immediately, the mothers being the usual executioners. The latter have even been known to pride themselves on the destruction of their daughters, and to consider their murder as an act of duty, though, as they are mild, modest, and affectionate, if they belonged to any other tribe, they would abhor it. But indeed, the whole of the Jarejahs at first rather piqued themselves on this custom as an honourable distinction. Of the extremely few females who were allowed to escape the general fate, Colonel Walker could never find out that they had been spared either out of affection or humanity, except in two instances, and one of them in the person of a professed robber. Is it not Lord Byron who talks of lilies occasionally springing up on rocks of Granite? and we prefer a robber to a Bramin at any time.

The name of the man to whom sentiment and feeling might be supposed strangers, was Huttaji. With the aspect and manners of a barbarian, Colonel Walker found him to possess all the feelings of natural affection, which led him to cherish two daughters, in opposition to the spirit and prejudices of his tribe. They were between six and eight years of age, when they were brought to Colonel Walker's camp to be vaccinated, and he observed their father caressing them with pleasure, and exulting in them with true parental affection. It exhibits a strong feature in the character of the Jarejahs, and of their feelings with respect to their daughters, that these girls wore turbans, and were habited like *boys*, and, as if afraid or ashamed to acknowledge their sex, assured the Colonel that they were not *girls*, and with infantine simplicity appealed to their father to corroborate the assertion.

A long negociation followed to induce the Jarejahs to relinquish Infanticide, but so rooted are the Hindoos to their customs, good or bad, the most formidable obstacles are to be surmounted, and for a long time Colonel Walker was amused and chagrined with promises and disappointments from a Chief whose interest it was to cultivate the favour of the Company; but at length, in 1807, the following letter was obtained from Jehaji, a Jarejah Chief:—

“ You have often urged me to adopt some course to preserve my daughter, and I am convinced you look upon me as your own when you desire me to do this; but the Jarejahs have from *ancient times* killed their daughters, and I cannot first set a new example.* I am much annoyed by Mallia; if, therefore, you reduce Mallia, and keep it sub-

* The murder-inducing Irish system is retained precisely on the principle here avowed by the Jarejah Chief.

ject to the Company, or give it to me, as well as restore Hunalla ; if you should favour me so much, my present distress will be removed, and I will meet your wishes in preserving my daughters."

By this paper the inviolability of the principle was given up, and Colonel Walker was encouraged to apply to the mother of the Chief ; but *she* contended for the ancient privilege of the caste—adding, at the same time, that the " Jarejahs have never reared their daughters, nor can it now be the case." The Colonel, however, ceased not his attacks upon Jehaji, from whom, after much solicitation, and giving him to understand the advantages and credit which he would derive from the Company, by complying with their request, he obtained a writing to the following effect:—" From motives of friendship, the Honourable Company have urged me to preserve my daughters ; to this I consent, if the Chiefs of Newanagger and Gondar agree." By the influence of a Bramin, the Gondar Chief was at length prevailed upon to enter into a formal obligation to renounce for ever the practice of infanticide. The following is a translation of this most curious instrument.

" Whereas, the Honourable English Company and *Anand Rao Gaikawar Serra Khasil Shumsher Baheder*, having set forth to us the dictates of the Sastras and the true faith of the Hindoos ; as well as that the Brahmervaiverkeka Purana declares the killing of children to be a heinous sin, it being written, that it is as great an offence to kill an embryo as a Bramin ; that to kill one woman is as great a sin as a hundred Bramins ; that to put one child to death is as great a sin as to kill a hundred women ; and that the perpetrators of this sin shall be damned to the hell Kulesoothca, where he shall be infested with as many maggots as he may have hairs on his body ; be born again a leper, and debilitated in all his members :—We, Jarejah Dewaji and Koer Nuther, Zanenders of Gondar (the custom of female infanticide having long prevailed in our *caste*) do hereby agree for ourselves and for our offspring for ever, for the sake of our own prosperity and the credit of the Hindoo faith, that we shall from this day renounce this practice ; and that in default of this, that we acknowledge ourselves offenders against the Sirkars. Moreover, should any one in future commit this offence, we shall expel him from our *caste*, and he shall be punished according to the pleasure of the two governments, and the rule of the Sastras."

This was readily signed by all the chiefs except one, who at length also consented, and the happiest effects were immediately experienced. The annual amount of female infanticides in Guzarat had been estimated at *five thousand* ; at the end of the year 1808, *three* only appeared to have been committed from the date of the above paper, and one of them rested merely on report.

In a subsequent expedition through that part of the country, Colonel Walker, on his halt at Dhevole, had all the neighbouring Jarejahs, who preserved their children, brought to his tent. He well describes his emotions on the occasion, and the gratification he experienced in observing the triumph of nature, feeling and parental affection, over prejudice and a horrid superstition ; and that those, who but a short period before would have doomed their infants to destruction without compunction, should thus glory in their preservation. The Jarejah fathers, who were with such difficulty brought to listen to the preser-

vation of their daughters, now exhibited them with pride and fondness. Their mothers placed their infants in the hands of Colonel Walker, and called on him and their Gods to protect what he alone had taught them to preserve. These infants they emphatically called *his* children ; and it is likely that this distinction will continue to exist for some years, at least, in Guzarat.

Such is the substance collected from the report of Colonel Walker to the East India Company, of as affecting and interesting a triumph on the part of reason and humanity over barbarity and prejudice, as was ever recorded. Whether the forthcoming spectacle at Drury-lane Theatre be founded on these very extraordinary customs, we know not ; but we have no doubt that our readers will agree with us, that they are admirably well adapted for the picturesque and melodramatic department of the theatre, which may dispense with a portion of the verisimilitude which is essential to the regular drama. *Le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable*, is an adage to be attended to by the latter ; but possibly the former may be occasionally favoured by a neglect of it. At all events, we think that some of the theatres whose business is spectacle and the marvellous, might make use of a narrative so capable at once of striking and affecting incident, romantic scenery, and stage effect. To be sure, as Bayes says, it might be necessary to "insinuate the plot into the boxes," by means of a little printed explanation ; but this we believe is often found necessary in the extravaganza line already.

COMMON PLACES.—(Continued.)

LIV.

Authors, a short time since, set upon Government:—Government have of late turned the tables on them, and set upon authors. In one respect, it must be confessed, the court-tools have greatly the advantage of us : they can go all lengths in vulgar Billingsgate and abuse, without being charged with vulgarity. They have the sanction of the Court ; they plead the King's privilege. It is not to be supposed that any thing inelegant or gross can be patronised at Carlton-house. Every thing about a place, even the convenience of an Admiralty-secretary, must, one would think, be kept sweet and wholesome. But instead of the last refinement and polish, they treat us with nothing, but garbage. A lie and a nickname are their favourite figures of rhetoric—the alternate substitutes for wit and argument—the twin-supporters of the Bible and the Crown. They use us (it seems) contrary to the advice of Hamlet, "according to our own deserts, and not their own dignity." The dirt they fling sticks on their opponents, without soiling their own fingers. Loyalty is "the true fuller's earth that takes out all stains." At all events, do or say what they can, it is they who are the *gentlemen*, and we who are the *blackguards*. If we were to call Sir Walter Scott a *Sawney* writer, or Mr. Croker *Jackey*, it would be thought shocking, indecent, vulgar, and no one would look at our publication twice : yet on the Tory side, the same thing passes for the height of sense and wit ; and ladies of quality are delighted with the *John Bull*, gentlemen read *Blackwood*, and divines take in the *Quarterly*. There

is Mr. William Mudford of the *Courier*, a vapid common-place hack, pert and dull—but who would think of calling him by the diminutive of his Christian name? No; these are the extreme resources reserved for the Court-classics, who, in the zeal of their loyalty, are allowed to forget their manners. There is, in fact, nothing too mean for the genius of these writers, or too low for the taste of their employers.

LV.

A Tory can rise no higher than *the assumption of a question*. If he relied on any thing but custom and authority, he would cease to be a Tory. He has a prejudice in favour of certain *things*, and against certain *persons*. This is all he knows of the matter. He therefore gives you assertions for argument, and abuse for wit. If you ask a reason for his opinions, he calls you names; and if you ask why he does so, he proves that he is in the right, by repeating them a thousand times. A nickname is with him the test of truth. It vents his spleen, strengthens his own prejudices, and communicates them mechanically to his hearers.

LVI.

When an Elector of Hanover is made into a King of England, what does he become in the course of a century?—A George the Fourth.

LVII.

If I were to give a toast at a loyal and patriotic meeting, it should be—*Down with the Stuarts all over the world!*

LVIII.

The taste of the Great in pictures is singular, but not unaccountable. The King is said to prefer the Dutch to the Italian School of painting; and if you hint your surprise at this, you are looked upon as a very Gothic and *outré* sort of person. You are told, however, by way of consolation—"To be sure, there is Lord Carlisle likes an Italtan picture—Mr. Holwell Carr likes an Italian picture—the Marquis of Stafford is fond of an Italian picture—Sir George Beaumont likes an Italian picture!"—These, notwithstanding, are regarded as quaint and daring exceptions to the established rule; and their preference is a species of *lèse-majesté* in the Fine Arts, as great an eccentricity and want of fashionable etiquette, as if any gentleman or nobleman still preferred old claret to new, when the King is known to have changed his mind on this subject, or was guilty of the offence of dipping his fore-finger and thumb in the middle of a snuff-box, instead of gradually approximating the contents to the edge of the box, according to the most approved models. One would imagine that the great and exalted in station would like lofty subjects in works of art, whereas they seem to have an exclusive predilection for the mean and mechanical. One would think those whose word is law, would be pleased with the great and striking effects of the pencil: * on the contrary, they admire nothing but the little and elaborate. They have a fondness for cabinet or *furniture* pictures, and a proportionable antipathy to works of

* The Duke of Wellington, it is said, cannot enter into the merits of Raphael, but he admires "the spirit and fire of Tintoret" I do not wonder at this bias. A sentiment, probably, never dawned upon his Grace's mind; but he may be supposed to relish the dashing execution and *hit or miss* manner of the Venetian artist. Oh, Raphael! well is it that it was one who did not understand thee, that blundered upon the destruction of humanity!

genius. Even arts with them must be servile, to be tolerated. Perhaps the seeming contradiction may be thus explained. These persons are raised so high above the rest of the species, that the more violent and agitating pursuits of mankind appear to them like the turmoil of ants on a mole-hill. Nothing interests them but their own pride and self-importance. Our passions are to them an impertinence; an expression of high sentiment they rather shrink from as a ludicrous and upstart assumption of equality. They, therefore, like what glitters to the eye, what is smooth to the touch; but they shun, by an instinct of sovereign taste, whatever has a soul in it, and implies a *reciprocity* of feeling. The gods of the earth can have no interest in any thing human; they are cut off from all sympathy with "the bosoms and businesses of men." Instead of requiring to be wound up beyond their habitual feeling of stately dignity, they wished to have the springs of our strained pretension let down, to be relaxed with "trifles light as air," to be amused with the familiar and frivolous, and to have the world appear a scene of *still life*, except as they disturb it! The little in thought and internal sentiment is a necessary relief and set-off to the oppressive sense of external magnificence. Hence Kings babble and repeat they know not what. A childish dotage often accompanies the consciousness of absolute power. Repose is somewhere necessary, and the soul sleeps, while the senses gloat around. Besides, the mechanical and high-finished style of art may be considered as something *done to order*. It is a task to be executed more or less perfectly, according to the price given and the industry of the artist. We stand by, as it were, see the work done, insist upon a greater degree of neatness and accuracy, and exercise a sort of petty, jealous jurisdiction over each particular. We are judges of the minuteness of the details, and though ever so nicely executed, as they give us no ideas beyond what they had before, we do not feel humbled in the comparison. The artisan scarcely rises into the artist; and the name of genius is degraded, rather than exalted in his person. The performance is so far ours that we have paid for it, and the highest price is all that is necessary to produce the highest finishing. But it is not so in works of genius and imagination. Their price is above rubies. The inspiration of the Muse comes not with the *fiat* of a monarch, with the donation of a patron; and therefore the Great turn with disgust or effeminate indifference from the mighty masters of the Italian school, because such works baffle and confound their self-will, and make them feel that there is something in the mind of man which they can neither give nor take away.

"Quam nihil ad tuum, Papinane, ingenium!"

LIX.

The style of conversation in request in courts proceeds much upon the same principle. It is low, and it is little. I have known a few persons who have had access to the Presence (and who might be supposed to catch what they could of the tone of royalty at second-hand, bating the dignity—God knows there was nothing of that!)—and I should say they were the *highest finishers* in this respect I ever met with. No circumstance escaped them, they worked out all the details (whether to the purpose or not) like a fac-simile, they mimicked every thing, explained every thing, the story was not *told*, but acted over again. It is true, there were no *grandes pensées*, there was a complete truce with

all thought and reflection—but they were everlasting dealers in matters of fact, and there was no end of their minute prolixity—one must suppose this mode pleased their betters, or was copied from them. Dogberry's declaration—“ Were I as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all upon your worship”—is not perhaps so much a blunder of the clown's, as a sarcasm of the poet's. Are we to account for the effect (as before) from supposing that their overstrained attention to great things makes them seek for a change in little ones? Or that their idea of themselves as raised above every one else is confirmed by dwelling on the meanest and most insignificant objects? Or is it that from their ignorance and seclusion from the world, every thing is alike new and wonderful to them? Or that dreading the insincerity of those about them, they exact an extraordinary degree of trifling accuracy, and require every one to tell a story, as if he was giving evidence on oath before a court of justice? West said that the late King used to get him up into a corner, and fairly put his hands before him so that he could not get away, till he had got every particular out of him relating to the affairs of the Royal Academy. This weakness in the mind of kings has been well insisted on by Peter Pindar. It is of course like one of the spots in the sun.

TABLE TALK.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.—It was reported of this eminent painter, that he shared with his man Ralph in the money which the latter received on showing his pictures. In allusion to this rumour, Dr. Farmer once happily quoted the lines from Hudibras,—

A squire he had, whose name was Ralph,
Who in th' adventure went his half.

There are certain tasks which are peculiarly inappropriate to the Leviathans of learning. Bentley made sad work with Milton, and Warburton's Shakespeare was a miserable affair. Quin's observation on the publication of the latter was pleasant and correct. “ He ought to have stuck to his own *Bible*, and not have meddled with ours.”

It is a great mistake to suppose that a philosophical spirit is in direct contradistinction to an imaginative one. On the contrary, the highest order of thinkers and discoverers, such as Bacon, Newton, and Leibnitz, are mainly indebted to the imaginative faculty. A case in point:—The latter, when occupied in his philosophical reasonings on his “ Law of Continuity,” his singular sagacity enabled him to predict a discovery which was afterwards realized,—he *imagined* the necessary existence of a polypus. The supposition of Columbus in regard to the existence of a Western Continent, was also imaginative.

When custom was urged in favour of some abuses which the Chancellor Audley wished to put down, he replied, “ The usage hath been to rob at Shooter's-hill; is it therefore lawful?” We are not quite sure that Mr. Banks would not reply, Yes. He certainly would, as to some sort of Gadshill people. In Ireland, thousands of interested people brawl an affirmative every day.

In the Russian language, the terms *beautiful*, *red*, and *coloured*, are all three represented by the same word. Was a consequent confusion in the head of the unhappy Paul the cause of his erecting that absurdity, his *red* palace?

The modern chivalry, which so exalts the female, has seldom, even in manners, extended to the monarch, at least out of France. A billet-doux of the Emperor Charles V. is preserved in the last page of an illuminated prayer-book in the Imperial library at Vienna, which was a gift from that sovereign to his mistress. It thus gallantly concludes, “ *Je suis votre bon maitre, CHARLES QUINT.* ”

IMMORTALITY.

LIFE is eternal thought;
 Think ye the womb
 Can be the primal stage
 Of a Spirit's doom?
 There is life forgotten,
 This life before—
 And the life that cometh after
 We leave the world's shore.
 From Godhead to Angel,
 From man to the fly,
 Burns the fire of intelligence :—
 Nothing can *die*.
 All are expanding lights,
 Nor the Deity
 Doth a single star of that host;
 To darkness decree.
 Death is an idle name
 It is but change,
 Or the draught of oblivion,
 That maketh things strange.
 We are a part of God,
 And ever must be;
 He is the lonely Lord
 Of bright Eternity.
 To the curve as its asymptote
 Flieth evermore,
 To the love that is perfection
 The spirit shall soar.*

* This simile of the soul approaching perfection through all Eternity, but, like that mathematical line which pursues but never unites with another, ever distant from its goal, is to be found in the writings of Addison.

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